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would appear as a Memoir of the Zoological Survey. The outbreak of the war with Japan stopped all publications. As the war dragged on and it appeared that Government Publications would be unduly delayed the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal accepted the manuscript for this series. I am deeply grateful to all concerned.

Of course thanks and acknowledgement are due to a host of Kols who graciously allowed themselves to be questioned and probed, measured and photographed. They have admitted us into their houses and into their counsels. They have shared with us many of their joys, troubles and difficulties. They are a very human folk, and as one sat and talked with them, his heart went out to them, and we felt as one. They have been pleased and touched as we have attempted to understand their life and thought. What is here offered of that, however, is but a drop in the great ocean of Kol experience, and the author is conscious of all its limitations.

It is also necessary to make clear the terminology of this book, for there has been a change in the meaning of terms. The word 'Kol' was once used in a generic sense to describe 'Munda-speaking' tribes and the term 'Kolarian' is still frequently found, especially in older textbooks of Ethnology. The word was originally used by Max Muller in a linguistic sense, but has now been generally abandoned in favour of 'Munda'. The Munda-speaking people, as distinguished from the Dravidian, delineate the large majority of the aboriginal people living in Chota Nagpur and in the highlands of Central India. The word 'Kol' as it will appear in these pages denotes a particular branch of the 'Munda-speaking' stock settled in Central India.

There are various theories held today as to the racial composition of present-day India. The first inhabitants of India are thought to have been a Negroid people akin to the Negritos of today. This strain is at present largely submerged. In the course of time another race of people became dominant in the land. Dr. Guha has called them Proto-Australoids. They apparently displaced the Negritos and probably absorbed some of their blood. The Proto-Australoids of India show marked resemblances to the Veddas of Ceylon and to the aborigines of Australia. Practically the whole of the Central Indian and South Indian tribes, though speaking different tongues, belong to this group. If anything, these people may be called the true autochtones of the Indian Peninsula. This same racial stratum persists today (though probably modified by contacts with other groups) in the Oraons, Santals, Mundas and Kharias of Bihar; in the Kols, Bhils, Gonds, Korkus, Baigas, etc., of Central India; in upper India among

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some of the lower castes such as the Chamars and Doms; and in South India in the Chenchus, Kurambas and Yeruvas.

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The aim of attempting to present as accurately and completely as possible what the Kol is, does and thinks, has been constantly kept in mind. This is a study of a primitive tribe living in contact with Hindu influences. No attempt has been made to exclude any materials which Kols have in common with other village people, and to present those things peculiar to Kols alone. One would in that case not get an accurate picture of the Kol as he is, for much of what he considers his own is also the possession of many groups among whom he lives. Uniformity of belief and practice is nowhere characteristic of India, nor of this tribe, but the general picture as here presented has been found remarkably consistent through the areas we have toured. It is the author's hope that this book will encourage further studies in primitive groups, and also help to preserve the memory of these children of Sheori.

W. G. G.